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Trump's anti-Muslim talk sparks call to remove his name from building

metroNEWS

Property values will spike, agency warns

HOUSING MARKET

East Vancouver values jump 28 per cent

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

Expect to gulp, feel anxious and start pinching pennies if a letter from B.C. Assessment lands on your doorstep this holiday season.

An unusually high number of Metro Vancouver homeowners should expect an early warning that their property values — and potentially their property taxes — will spike next year.

B.C. Assessment is sending advance notification to 22,000 homeowners in Greater Vancouver to warn them their 2016 property assessments will increase more than 15 per cent above the neighbourhood average, a jump that could mean a higher bill from municipal property tax collectors.

The Crown corporation sends advance notice every year to homeowners who can expect a big increase, but there are "significantly more" people affected this year due to the rapidly rising real estate market, assessor Jason Grant said Tuesday.

"It's not the only time values have moved this dramatically, but there's really only been two or three other years since 1980."

The jump is highest for single-family homes in Vancouver's east side, where assessed values rose 28 per cent to $1,267,000 in 2016 from 2015. The next highest increases are expected in Burnaby (27 per cent), West Vancouver and Vancouver's west side (23 per cent).

Condos values are only expected to rise between five to 10 percent, Grant said, and homeowners outside of Metro Vancouver will typically see between zero and 10 per cent increases.

Property taxes increase based on how a home's value moves relative to those around it, so bills will not necessarily be higher for everyone. Cities can also adjust their property tax rates.

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news
Wednesday, December 9, 2015

MARCH FORWARD 'LIKE A TERMINATOR' ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Yellow Cab gives siblings a lift

MAKING IT RIGHT

Company sorry for no-show, offers pair a free dinner

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

A Vancouver woman and her brother will still get to enjoy a holiday dinner on the town after missing their Christmas party because the wheelchair accessible cab they ordered three hours in advance never showed up.

Holly Millar, 54, and her brother Kris Martell, 42, who has cancer and is confined to a wheelchair, were dressed up and ready to go to the party Friday night, but a series of unfortunate communication errors at Yellow Cab meant their ride no-showed.

But after hearing Millar's story on Monday and investigating what went wrong, Yellow Cab general manger Carolyn Bauer called her Tuesday with an apology and an offer to take the siblings out for a festive meal.

"She said, well they can't give back the Christmas party, but they would like to send a cab — on time — and take us anywhere we wanted to go for dinner," Millar said.

Millar was not expecting any response so was pleasantly surprised by the gesture.

"I've got to say this whole thing has me stunned," she said. She's still irked with the dispatchers and city council, but she believes Bauer sincerely wants to make things right. As for dinner? She has to talk it over with her brother, but she's thinking steak.

Bauer told Metro she and the company president listened to recordings of Millar's calls and are "just heartbroken" by what happened Friday night.

"To go through these health issues at Christmas time, to get that dress, to plan a night out, to get excited about what some of us take for granted on a daily basis ... Yellow Cab let her down, absolutely."

> **I've got to say this whole thing has me stunned.**
> Holly Millar, who with her brother missed a party because a cab didn't come

Bauer knows she can't take back what happened, but is sorry and believes the company can prevent similar situations by educating staff and make it more obvious in the online booking system when someone books an accessible cab.

"That's not to say there won't be waits for accessible vehicles," she added.

The Vancouver Taxi Association (Bauer is a spokeswoman) applied for 78 additional accessible taxi licences but B.C. Passenger Transportation Board only granted 20. The association appealed that decision last December, but the board rejected the appeal in October.

The association has applied for 200 temporary taxi licences over the holiday season. In the interim, Bauer said she's heard stories about people using car2go to get home after drinking at holiday parties.

She pleaded with the public to write to the province and demand more they're licensed, inspected and regulated.

"People always say, 'I want Uber.' They want Uber because they can't get a taxi — well, help us get taxis."

Above: A Yellow Cab in Vancouver. The taxi company called a local woman to apologize after unfortunate communication errors led to the pair missing their Christmas party.
JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

Right: Kris Martell and his compassion dog Lily in August 2015, when Martell was first able to get around in a wheelchair.
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Commission not at fault for cancellations: chair

VENUES

Non-farming permits needed for weddings

Tereza Verenca
For Metro | Vancouver

Gary Moran of Chilliwack's Fantasy Farms transports wedding guests to the ceremony area. SUBMITTED

The chair of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) says the organization is not to blame for the recent cancellations of farm weddings across the province.

Frank Leonard told Metro that's the last thing the ALC wants to see as it tries to bring farms in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) up to code. As it stands, non-farming business — like a wedding — needs a non-farming permit.

"Any contact we've made, we have not asked for a cancellation. We've suggested to the people that they honour their bookings," he said. Many of the cancellations, he added, are a result of farmers running into issues with the city, not with the ALC.

"If somebody has a problem with the fire marshal, they're not going to be able to hold the event whether we're involved or not."

The ALC steps in when it receives a complaint, usually from a neighbour or the local government. The commission then follows up with phone calls and a letter, requesting the farm obtain a non-farming permit, Leonard explained.

At the end of the day, he said the ALC's job isn't to add an extra level of bureaucracy, but to protect B.C.'s farmland.

"If somebody's just putting up temporary awnings, canopies, they bring in some chairs and some porta-potties, and you have a farm that has the occasional wedding, that's wonderful, that's great.

"Why we want to make sure we go through permitting is that by saying yes to the wedding, we don't end up with an event centre, a commercial kitchen and a big parking lot where there used to be farming."

Meanwhile, the ALC has issued three stop-work orders in the past 14 months, according to the chair.

"Where we have issued them, we have said we would like to work with the property owner to get to compliance. We're looking to solve a problem, not create more problems," Leonard said.

He also dispelled the myth that it takes two years to process a permit application. It takes about three months.

Gary Moran of Chilliwack's Fantasy Farms cancelled the eight weddings he had booked for 2016. While he plans to apply for a non-farming permit, he said he's not happy about it.

"I've been doing agri-tourism for 22 years. Everyone knows what we do here," Moran said of his annual festivities, including a pumpkin patch and garlic festival.

"Why do I need to apply for a non-farm use when I still farm? I can't wrap my head around that."

> **"Why do I need to apply for a non-farm use when I still farm? I can't wrap my head around that.**
> Gary Moran of Chilliwack's Fantasy Farms

ATTEMPTED ROBBERY

Four suspects sought

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

Police are searching for four masked men, one with a baseball bat, who attempted to rob a convenience store in Abbotsford on Sunday.

Const. Ian MacDonald of Abbotsford police said officers were called to the Bradner Road convenience store at 5:45 p.m. after the four masked men walked in, sending the female store owner outside screaming.

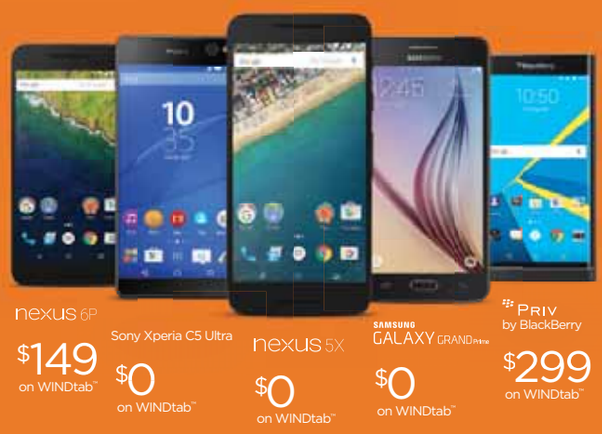
"It's pretty frightening," MacDonald told Metro. "Four guys rush into the store with masks on and the lead guy has a baseball bat in hand … she rightfully goes into panic and starts screaming and runs from the store."

MacDonald said the woman's husband, who heard the commotion, rushed to help her.

Police believe the suspects were most likely not experienced or sophisticated criminals, as the store owner's reaction caused them to flee in an older four-door, grey-coloured sedan, leaving behind one of their own. "They broke that rule of not leaving behind your wing man," said MacDonald.

They did not steal anything from the store before fleeing.

MacDonald said the suspect who was left behind then tried to hit the husband with the baseball bat before fleeing on foot. This suspect is described as white, in his 20s with a thin build, and about five-feet-four. He was also wearing dark clothing at the time.



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A team of researchers are studying **wild sunflowers** in an effort to make their cultivated counterparts more flood resistant and drought tolerant. COURTESY JASON RICK

Research may give flower power

SCIENCE

Vancouver scientist hopes to engineer a tougher plant

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

Imagine a sunflower that can grow using water more efficiently, even thriving in conditions as harsh as the Mojave Desert while still producing many seeds.

That's what an international team of scientists led by Vancouver botanist Loren Rieseberg is hoping to achieve through research he believes could improve food security for people around the world in the face of climate change.

"Drought is by far the biggest stress for sunflowers," Rieseberg, a botany professor at the University of B.C., told Metro. "The idea of our research is to make cultivated sunflowers that are extremely drought tolerant, but also tolerant of flooding, salt stress and low nutrient stress."

The team, funded by a $7.5-million grant from Genome BC, Genome Canada and other organizations, is using genomics to identify genes that have evolved in wild sunflowers to make them resilient to environmental stresses, and to breed cultivated sunflowers with the same favourable traits.

Sunflowers are an ideal crop for helping scientists better understand the mechanisms that plants use to combat environmental stresses, said Rieseberg.

That's because their wild counterparts have adapted to a variety of extreme habitats.

Thanks to genomics, Rieseberg said he and his team are able to identify these favourable genes with greater precision than previous plant-breeding techniques.

Sunflowers are already relatively stress tolerant, but some wild species are incredibly resistant against drought, he said. In experiments, the team planted wild sunflowers alongside cultivated sunflowers in dry, drought-like conditions and found that the former thrived while latter ultimately died out.

The team is also identifying favourable genes in a species of sunflower called Helianthus anomalus, which grows on sand dunes.

"Sand dunes have almost no nutrients in them," said Rieseberg. "But that sunflower is doing just fine. It's very tolerant of low-nutrient conditions."

Other environmental stresses that sunflowers face include flooding, especially in areas like Manitoba's Red River Valley, which is prone to flooding every spring.

Rieseberg said his team has already identified a gene that could offer sunflowers in that region some tolerance against flooding.

Sunflowers are also grown widely in developing countries for food, but many crops die in these parts of the world due to a lack of fertilizer, he said.

"The big losses are often just due to the fact that they can't afford to put enough fertilizer on," he said. "But if you actually breed cultivars that do just fine with low nutrients, then you get around that input problem."

A type of wild sunflower, **Helianthus anomalus**, which is tolerant of low-nutrient soils. COURTESY JASON RICK

If successful, Rieseberg said he hopes the research will allow farmers to grow sunflowers on lands that are currently unsuitable for crops.

"We have a growing world population to feed, and at the same time, due to climate change and the degradation of soil, we need more crops that can grow on secondary lands," he said. "We really need crops that don't require as many inputs, especially for developing countries."

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Dump Trump name: councillor

BACKLASH

Jang asks for removal of name from city tower

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

A Vancouver councillor has asked the developer of the swanky downtown Trump tower to consider removing the Trump brand after Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States."

Coun. Kerry Jang said he texted the head of local developer Holborn on Tuesday morning with a plea to reconsider the name of the 63-storey tower designed by Arthur Erikson, which will feature a luxury hotel and residences.

"I couldn't believe my ears when I heard Trump's comments. I literally s--- a brick," Jang said. "I thought, 'Oh great, we have a beacon of racism in our city.'"

Donald Trump's call to ban Muslims from the U.S. has sparked calls to reconsider the brand of the downtown high-rise. METRO FILE

Jang was especially incensed that Trump expressed support for the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, a policy Vancouver is trying to reconcile with its Japanese community.

The city doesn't have the power to remove the name from the tower because it's a licensing agreement between Holborn and Trump, Jang said, so it will be up to Holborn.

"You can't put a price on fighting racism in our city," Jang said.

Jang has yet to hear back from Holborn. A spokeswoman working on behalf of Holborn said CEO Joo Kim was on an international flight so she had not yet been able to reach him.

> **You can't put a price on fighting racism in our city.**
> Coun. Kerry Jang

Jang's comments stem from a campaign to remove the Trump name galvanized by Vancouver's former top planner Brent Toderian.

Toderian took to Twitter Monday night to lambast the Trump name attached to the tower on West Georgia.

"As #Trump calls to ban Muslims from entering the U.S, I seriously suggest that Vancouverites call on @TrumpVancouver to remove his name," Toderian wrote in post that was shared hundreds of times.

Toderian has previously criticized the Trump brand as incompatible with the Vancouver, but his call to action is gaining traction as Trump's presidential campaign gets increasingly racist.

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COURTS

Crown left out key details: Trial

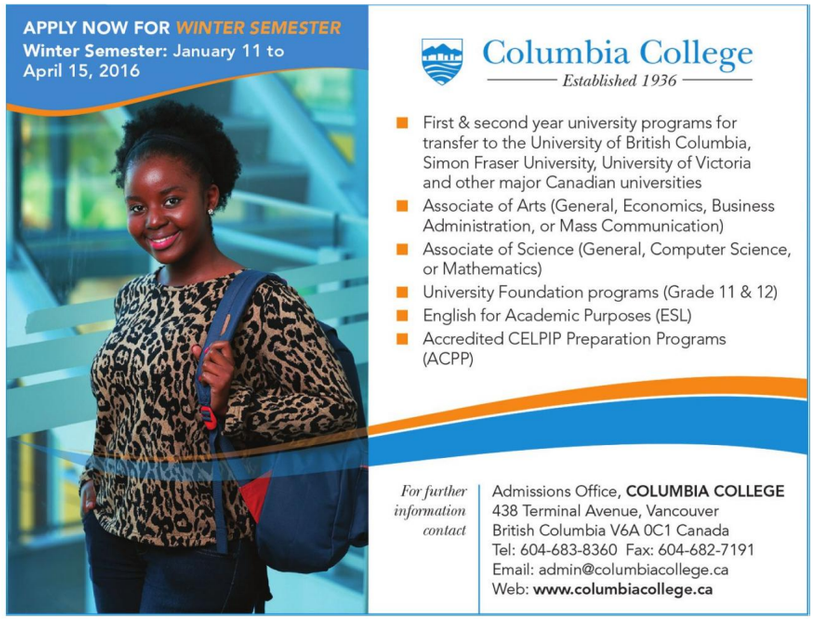
A man imprisoned for nearly three decades on wrongful sexual assault convictions didn't know another suspect had lived across the street, a Vancouver court has heard.

Ivan Henry's lawyer said in closing arguments that the Crown failed to disclose crucial details about another suspect, and that would have been powerful to his defence at a 1983 trial.

"The evidence at the trial was that Henry lived in the heart of where the assaults were taking place," Marilyn Sandford told B.C. Supreme Court on Tuesday.

She said Henry moved to the neighbourhood in 1982, years after the assaults began. The other man had been surveilled by police as a suspect, had a history of sexual predation and more closely resembled a composite drawing, she added.

THE CANADIAN PRESS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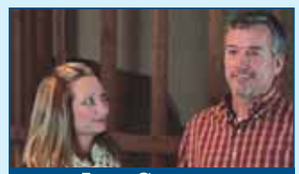

John Cooksey

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Crime mapping hits web

VPD

Interactive tool shows where offences are happening

Tereza Verenca
For Metro | Vancouver

Vancouverites wanting to know exactly what kind of crime is happening in their neighbourhood can now access that information in an instant.

On Tuesday, the Vancouver Police Department announced the launch of GeoDash, an interactive mapping tool. Whether it's a break-and-enter, a car theft or a homicide, users can see the date and general location of the crime.

The data is refreshed every 24 hours and works on both the Android and iOS operating systems.

"We realized that the information we were providing to the public was a little bit behind the times," said Chief Const. Adam Palmer during a press conference. "It was sort of old-fashioned statistical spreadsheets in Excel ... and we realized we could improve what we were providing in a more modern platform."

A screengrab from the VPD's GeoDash mapping tool shows some of the crimes committed in Vancouver's downtown peninsula over a 24-hour period. GEODASH.VPD.CA

Palmer added when developing the program, privacy was the top priority. As such, no personal or identifiable information will be made public.

The location of incidents against a person — like an assault or a robbery — has been randomized and will show at an intersection, as opposed to a specific residence.

"For property-related offences, it's going to be showing in the hundred block, but without the address," Palmer said. "If something happened at 1234 Main St., it would show on the map as 12XX Main St."

Besides being transparent with its crime data, VPD hopes GeoDash inspires people to participate in things like Block Watch and other crime-prevention activities. It's also a good tool for identifying crime trends within a two-year period, Palmer noted.

There's also a GPS feature that allows users to see what crimes have happened in the area they're in. So if someone was downtown for a movie and wanted to know if a parking lot was safe, GeoDash could provide peace of mind.

But some offences, like forgeries, have not been uploaded to the map.

Asked if the GeoDash will have ramifications for potential homeowners or renters, Palmer said VPD isn't sharing information that didn't exist before.

"The crime was always there. We're just showing people more accurately where it is."

TECH

$100M fund to boost tech entrepreneurs

The B.C. government is betting on the potential success of technology startups to boost job creation across the province.

Premier Christy Clark announced a $100-million venture capital fund to give early stage tech entrepreneurs access to money that will help grow their businesses.

She said the money will address the difficulty entrepreneurs face when trying to bankroll their innovative but untested ideas.

"Tech tends not to be guaranteed bets," Clark said Tuesday.

"This seed fund is going to be proof that the British Columbia government has faith and confidence in our tech industry. It will allow us to attract a lot of investment from around the world that we hope would match it."

The BC Tech Fund is the first part of a three-pronged strategy by government to enhance the technology sector's role in the government's broad economic plan. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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POLITICS

Election promise for inquiry fulfilled

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

With the Tuesday announcement that it's launching a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, the new Liberal government followed through on a central promise in its efforts to renew the relationship with Canada's indigenous peoples.

Nearly 1,200 indigenous women were murdered or went missing between 1980 and 2012, according to an RCMP report released last year. The Liberal election platform had promised to launch an inquiry "immediately."

There is no strict timeline, but Carolyn Bennett, the indigenous affairs minister, said it will last "as long as it takes to get it right.

"We hope, because people see this as urgent, that we can do this very efficiently and effectively," she said.

Interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose has expressed support for the inquiry, a reversal of the party's position when it was in government under Stephen Harper, and the NDP has long called for an inquiry.

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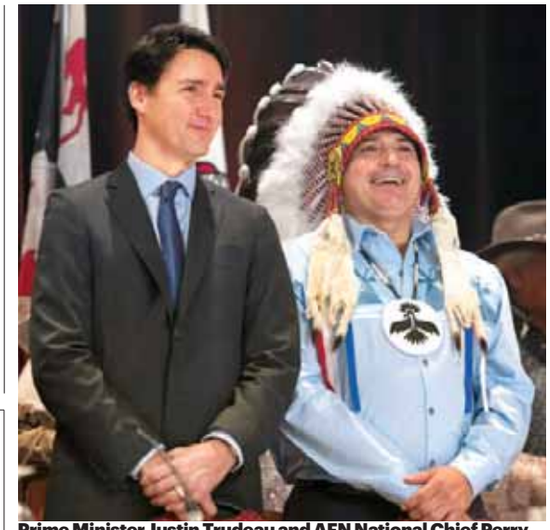

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly. Bellegarde said he's confident Trudeau is listening to the different needs of First Nations. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trudeau a 'partner'

FIRST NATIONS

PM announces probe, lifting of spending cap

The leaders of Canada's First Nations swaddled Justin Trudeau in a ceremonial blanket Tuesday as they embraced the newly elected prime minister's commitment to what he called a "sacred obligation" to the country's Aboriginal Peoples.

Trudeau didn't show up empty-handed, either.

The Liberal government will lift a long-standing two per cent cap on federal funding for First Nations communities, he told the Assembly of First Nations gathering — that, despite mounting economic and political pressure on the federal pocketbook.

He said the Liberals would also provide additional money for long-awaited education reforms to be led by First Nations communities themselves, another long-standing sticking point with the previous Conservative government.

And he repeated one of the most anticipated promises of the 2015 campaign: to investigate the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Three of his cabinet lieutenants kicked off the first consultative phase of what will be a federal inquiry next year.

"I promise you that I will be your partner in the years to come, and hope that you will be mine," Trudeau said.

The removal of the funding cap, which was imposed to keep transfer payments in line with inflation, has been top of the First Nations wish list for years. Critics say it has long since fallen out of step with a growing aboriginal population across the country.

But the most anticipated news came later, when Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu detailed the first phase of the inquiry.

Wilson-Raybould, one of two cabinet ministers with indigenous roots, said the government will consult the families of victims over the next two months for their input on the inquiry's shape and its goals.

"No inquiry, as we know, can undo what happened nor can it restore what we have lost. But it can help us find ways forward because we know, as a country, we can and must do better."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

We are going to go out and listen to what people say this needs to look like. Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett

Duffy takes the stand in own defence

COURT

Senator painted as ailing man vulnerable to pressure

Mike Duffy's first day of testimony could be dubbed "The Story of my Life," a long, often entertaining account of his childhood in Prince Edward Island, years in journalism, grim medical history and entry into the Senate.

It was the first time Duffy has spoken publicly since he stood briefly to plead "not guilty" to the 31 charges of fraud, breach of trust and bribery back when the trial started in April.

He has long waited for the chance to share his side of the story on his contested living and office expenses, and the $90,000 clandestine payment he received to repay some of those claims from Stephen Harper's chief of staff, Nigel Wright.

Duffy has maintained that he was railroaded by Harper's staff into repaying the claims, when he never thought he had done anything wrong.

The defence strategy was to build a portrait of a man with solid ties to Prince Edward Island; a long, successful journalism career with no experience running an office; and chronic health problems that made him vulnerable to pressure.

"But the relevance to the fraud charges?" exasperated Crown attorney Mark Holmes asked after the court was shown the long list of medications Duffy takes.

"This was going on while he was being subjected to all this pressure. Your Honour is going to make judgment to the susceptibility of the pressure that was being put on him," Duffy's defence lawyer, Donald Bayne, said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

In this artist's sketch, Senator Mike Duffy testifies at his trial in Ottawa on Monday. GREG BANNING/THE CANADIAN PRESS

PARIS

Schwarzenegger pushes climate action

Former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger urged subnational governments such as cities and provinces on Tuesday to march forward "like a Terminator" on environmental issues.

Three premiers — Ontario's Kathleen Wynne, Quebec's Philippe Couillard and Manitoba's Greg Selinger — were in the audience as the actor spoke at the international conference on climate change in Paris.

"If you happen to be a pessimist and you don't expect any agreement here, no Kyoto 2 or anything else, then of course sub-national governments — the cities, states and provinces — are the best insurance policy because local policies can control 70 per cent of (greenhouse gas) emissions," he said.

> **This is not the movie world.... We don't have scriptwriters who write a better ending. This is the real world.**
> Arnold Schwarzenegger

"We have the power to create a sustainable and healthy energy future."

The environmental activist said it is crucial for ordinary people to get involved at the grassroots level in the fight against climate change.

"It is our time, ladies and gentlemen, it is our moment to pick up the torch of a clean energy future in the cities and the states and in the provinces and march forward relentlessly like a Terminator," he said.

Schwarzenegger cited World Health Organization statistics that estimate the number of premature deaths from air pollution at seven million every year.

"This is not the movie world, which is the other world I come from," he said. "Here, we don't have special effects or visual effects. We don't have scriptwriters who write a better ending. This is the real world."

The former bodybuilder was California governor from 2003 to 2011 and in 2006 signed a bill creating a cap on greenhouse gas emissions.

He also founded a non-profit environmental body in 2010 that is a coalition of sub-national governments, private companies, international organizations and NGOs.

California's cap-and-trade system is to be linked with those of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba under the Western Climate Initiative. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Ikea monkey awaits new roommates

On the eve of the Ikea monkey's third anniversary at a sanctuary, workers are building enclosures for two potential roommates.

Darwin has been living at Story Book Farm Primate Sanctuary northeast of Toronto since Dec. 9, 2012.

Daina Liepa, a board member with the sanctuary, says two new Rhesus macaque monkeys will be arriving in January. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Search on for missing Canadian in Grenada

Police and community members were searching the small Caribbean island of Grenada on Tuesday for a woman from New Brunswick who disappeared while out jogging with her dog.

Assistant Supt. Sylvan McIntyre of the Royal Grenada Police Force said specialized units were involved in the search for Linnea Veinotte, who was reported missing Sunday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Outrage across the globe

POLITICS

Trump stands by plan to ban Muslims from entering U.S.

U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's call to block Muslims — both immigrants and visitors — from entering the U.S. is being met with a chorus of near-universal condemnation from across the country and around the globe.

From the halls of Congress to 10 Downing Street, Trump's statement Monday advocating a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" was blasted as bigoted, unconstitutional and potentially dangerous for American interests abroad.

Trump's proposal is down to what he describes as hatred among "large segments of the Muslim population" toward Americans.

British Prime Minister David Cameron, breaking the custom of British leaders not commenting on U.S. presidential contenders, slammed the proposal as "divisive, unhelpful and quite simply wrong."

UN spokesman Farhan Haq said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon denounced "any kind of rhetoric that relies on Islamophobia, xenophobia, any other appeal to hate any groups."

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a statement in support of religious freedom.

> **He's empowering the enemy.**
> Sen. Lindsey Graham, on Donald Trump

"This is not conservatism," Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan told reporters. "What was proposed yesterday is not what this party stands for, and more importantly it's not what this country stands for."

Trump's campaign has been marked by a pattern of inflammatory statements, dating back to rhetoric that some Mexican immigrants, who entered the country illegally, are drug smugglers and rapists — but even that didn't evoke the same widespread level of contempt.

The billionaire businessman and former reality TV star has maintained his lead in early opinion surveys, despite the controversies, vexing his Republican rivals and alarming a Republican establishment in panic over the damage they fear he's doing to a deeply divided party.

Trump, who appears to revel in the attention, didn't back down from his proposal Tuesday, saying that banning Muslims "until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on" is warranted after last month's attacks by Muslim extremists in Paris and last week's shootings in San Bernardino, Calif.

"I don't care about them," Trump told CNN Tuesday when asked about denunciation by Republican leaders. He said the country needs to recognize that it's at war.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Republican presidential candidate and businessman Donald Trump speaks during a rally aboard aircraft carrier USS Yorktown in Mt. Pleasant, S.C., Monday. MIC SMITH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EXPERT INPUT

Disaster for U.S., Canada

Jessica Smith Cross
Metro | Toronto

Trump's statement that he would ban Muslims from the U.S. is only the latest in bigoted politics that would spell disaster for both the U.S. and Canada, one expert says.

If Trump becomes president, it would cause contention within the U.S. that the country hasn't seen since its civil war, and lead to a major decline in America's moral influence in the world, worse than the era of George Bush Jr., said Stephen Clarkson, a political science professor at the University of Toronto.

A President Trump would be a disaster for Canada too, considering its close economic ties and shared border with the U.S.

Should Trump's bombast lead to a military action or another act of terrorism against the U.S., Canada has obligations under NATO to respond, Clarkson said.

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Smog new normal if you live in Beijing

CHINA

Residents of city adapting to pollution

Beijing issued a red alert this week for smog, triggering restrictions on traffic, school closures and factory suspensions. City residents reacted with a mix of alarm and nonchalance.

"This is modern life for Beijing people. We wanted to develop, and now we pay the price," Beijing office worker Cao Yong said during a break from work.

"You have to do whatever you can to protect yourself," Beijing resident Li Huiwen said while stopping at a market. "Even when wearing the mask, I feel uncomfortable and don't have any energy."

> **You just get used to it.**
> Store clerk in Beijing

A man who gave only his surname, Du, said the haze was good for taking photographs of old buildings and that he was taking advantage of a lack of crowds near Beijing's ancient Forbidden City. "I like this kind of haziness. It gives a blurry feeling and makes you feel like you're in a dream."

"You live in Beijing, you just get used to it. Every winter is like this," said a store clerk who gave only her surname, Sun, and who said the restrictions were a nuisance. "But now that they're cancelling school, it becomes really inconvenient."

"I would keep myself indoors, and wear a mask all the time if I'm outside on smoggy days. And air purifiers at home are a must," Beijing resident Sun Yuanyuan said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Many in Beijing are becoming accustomed to wearing masks during winter since episodes of nauseating smog lasting several days has become increasingly common.

ANDY WONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN BERNARDINO

Couple practised with rifles at range

Days before killing 14 people at a holiday party, Syed Farook practised with a rifle during one of several recent visits to a Southern California shooting range, authorities said. Sometimes he was joined by his wife, his partner in the attack.

Farook visited Riverside Magnum Range in San Bernardino on Nov. 29 and 30, according to an instructor at the range about 32 kilometres from the Inland Regional Center, where the couple opened fire on Farook's co-workers on Dec. 2.

John Galletta said nothing was out of the ordinary about Farook's behaviour but that Farook asked a range employee why his rifle might be smoking. He was told it was because it was new.

The FBI said Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, embraced violent Islamist ideology.

Authorities disclosed that a year before the rampage, Farook's co-workers at the San Bernardino County health department underwent training on how to react to a workplace shooter in the conference room where the couple opened fire.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Pistorius sentencing set for April, stays at uncle's

A judge Tuesday let Oscar Pistorius remain under house arrest at his uncle's mansion and set an April sentencing date, five days after an appeals court convicted the double-amputee Olympian of murdering his girlfriend. Pistorius' legal team plans to appeal. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cameroonians attacked Nigeria villages: Refugees

Cameroonian troops crossed the border into Nigeria, killed about 150 villagers, burned their huts and forced them to flee, Nigerian refugees said Tuesday after walking for days to reach a refugee centre. Cameroon's government denied the charges.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Survey shows big problems at CBC

REPORT

Workplace psychologically unhealthy, staffers say

Many employees of Canada's national broadcaster believe the CBC workplace is psychologically unhealthy and managers do not deal effectively with issues that may threaten or harm them, according to an internal survey carried out following the Jian Ghomeshi scandal.

"Psychological health and care for individual well-being are significant concerns," says a report released internally to CBC. The results show 43 per cent of survey respondents said they would not describe their workplace as psychologically healthy.

Concerns were also raised by survey respondents over whether the CBC deals effectively with "situations that may threaten or harm employees." Almost a third (29 per cent) said the CBC does not.

A CBC spokesman said the results of the survey are "humbling." Chuck Thompson said it "provides a new baseline from which we will address the concerns expressed."

The survey, conducted for CBC in the summer by Gallup, also showed that "pride of association" in the national broadcaster has plummeted from 92 per cent of employees feeling proud to be CBC journalists and support staff in 2012 to 69 per cent in 2015.

Just over one half of the CBC's 7,600 full- and part-time employees completed the survey. The questionnaire asked people to answer the questions on a 1-5 scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

It was sent out in the wake of the Ghomeshi scandal and the report by lawyer Janice Rubin, which found that CBC suffered from a "host culture" that allowed a top talent like the former Q host to get away with harassing behaviour.

The commentary provided along with the survey references the Rubin report and states that the CBC's response to the findings are "in full swing and should help to restore a workplace we can all be proud of." The commentary said it is important that CBC managers work at "establishing and nurturing strong relationships and healthy and respectful daily interactions."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **Psychological health and care for individual well-being are significant concerns.**
> Report released internally to CBC

BOSTON CHIPOTLE ROCKED BY NEW OUTBREAK Chipotle, still trying to recover from a multi-state outbreak of E. coli, has closed a restaurant in the Cleveland Circle neighbourhood of Boston after 80 students at Boston College, including the men's basketball team, reported "gastrointestinal symptoms" after eating at the chain. Chipotle says it thinks the latest illnesses are an isolated case of norovirus and unrelated to the E. coli cases. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Stores just can't keep top whisky on shelves

It was recently named World Whisky of the Year, but good luck getting your hands on a bottle of Crown Royal's Northern Harvest Rye, as the award-winning Canadian whisky is flying off the shelves.

The Northern Harvest Rye is the first Canadian whisky to receive the honour of being named World Whisky of the Year by revered whisky connoisseur Jim Murray who gave it 97.5 points out of 100 in his Whisky Bible, the go-to guide for enthusiasts.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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URBAN ETIQUETTE ELLEN VANSTONE

THE QUESTION

I made the mistake of starting things back up with someone I had a "casual" relationship with. He didn't want me to be involved with any other guys, but he wanted to see other women. I blocked his number. Now I miss our friendship. What should I do?

Ani Castillo

Dear Ellen,

I made the mistake of starting things back up with someone I had a "casual" relationship with. The last time we saw each other he was really emotional about an ex-girlfriend and told me he still loved her. When we originally stopped talking, I didn't mind. But when we reconnected, I started to feel an emotional connection to him. After the last meeting, I truly felt hurt. I cried. He wanted us to continue seeing each other, but he didn't want me to be involved with any other guys. The sad part was he wanted to see other women, including me, but sleep with just his ex and me. I decided enough was enough. I texted him after the last meeting, letting him know we could not continue down the same road. I didn't give him a chance to respond. I blocked his number. Lately I find that I can't stop thinking about him. I miss him and our "friendship." What should I do?

L, Toronto, Ont.

Dear L,

Some might say this is not, strictly speaking, an etiquette question. But I've found through my own romantic ups and downs that good manners can often help guide the way through emotional thickets. So let's see what we can do for you in regards to politely handling your own broken heart.

I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but your only choice right now is to suffer.

First, let's look at his behaviour. He sounds pretty screwed up. But at least he's not sneakily hiding his desire to get back with his ex-girlfriend. And he's been absolutely forthright about his ridiculous proposition that you remain available to him — and him alone — while he dates as many women as he wants while continuing to sleep with both you and his ex. So, credit to him for being honest, albeit insanely unreasonable.

It also sounds as if you've been straight with him, which shows your own excellent manners. You respectfully informed him in a text that you could not accept the "road" he was offering. Then you blocked his number. Is it rude to cut off communication like this?

Yes, if the other person deserves to be heard (and your conscience will tell you if that is the case). But it's not rude if you've both had your say and it's clear that one or both parties want the relationship to end.

Which brings us to your question: What should you do?

If you break down and see him, and give him what he wants (sex and friendship with no commitment while he sleeps with his ex-girlfriend), you will resent him and suffer. If you stay strong and keep his number blocked, but continue to obsess about him and wonder if you've made a huge mistake by cutting him off before he's had a chance to change and see how wonderful you are, you will doubt yourself and suffer.

I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but your only choice right now is to suffer. Respect your broken heart, and expedite the healing process by forgetting what you "should" do. You're already doing it — agonizing through an impossible situation that only time will heal (and it will).

Need advice?
Email Ellen:
scene@metronews.ca

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
metroview

The power of affirming that racism and sexism kill indigenous women

"It is time to hear their voices. It is time for justice," declared Claudette Commanda, an elder and band council member from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Nation in Quebec, an eagle feather in her hand.

She stood on Parliament Hill, welcoming reporters and family members of missing and murdered indigenous women to the announcement we all knew was coming: a national inquiry. It had all the trappings of a press conference, but the scene was imbued, even via a live video feed, with something different.

Something approaching humility, even sisterhood.

Commanda asked for a moment of silence for lives lost, and holding the feather high above her head, she teared up. She expressed hope for an end to violence against indigenous women, but her emotion suggested that she may actually believe in this announcement, believe there will be change.

Jody Wilson-Raybould, the minister of justice and a former B.C. First Nations chief, hugged Commanda before taking the podium. She, and the ministers of status of women and indigenous and northern affairs, attended a traditional ceremony the day before. They were carrying the eagle feathers gifted to them. As each finished speaking, they hugged, kissed cheeks.

It was as if a support circle stood behind the podium: Four women embracing each other and indigenous teachings in the search for answers to deeply engrained violence. Ministers listening to Commanda's prayer for help from the Creator with more than impersonal respect.

This wasn't the only heartfelt government announcement ever made. But it felt as if the "government" had been knocked from some pedestal. The welfare of indigenous Canadians, or all Canadians, had been put in its place.

That the press conference was about women, and delivered only by women, also felt significant — though women have given press conferences before. But these women seemed bound by their hearts as well as their priorities.

The ministers delivered talking points, citing high rates of violence against indigenous women, the need for justice and violence prevention.

The need to not be a government program, but a program devised by the people, to be implemented by government. Hence the choice to let the inquiry's details be shaped by consultation with experts and victims' families.

The media pressed for details. One CBC reporter asked about the impact of racism, and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett was unequivocal: "Racism and sexism in this country kills," she said. Behind the podium, the women hugged.

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metro LIFE
Your essential daily news
Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Odds in fans' favour for Hunger Games prequels
Lionsgate studio vice chairman says movie franchise will live on

4 Treats To Wow This Season

You don't have to be a kid to crave cookies this time of year. The holiday season is the one time you have a licence to bake (and eat) any (and all kinds) of treats. And you should. Homemade sweets are an easy way to make anyone feel giddy with happiness, and are impossible to resist. From spicy gingerbreads to sugar balls, these goodies make a thoughtful gift or easy dinner party dessert. They also taste pretty good with your morning coffee.

ALL PHOTOS BY MAYA VISNYEI

HOLIDAY TREATS

Chocolate Thumbprint Cookies

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

As classic as a sugar cookie, thumbprints can look sophisticated with a sparse sprinkling of icing sugar or kid-approved with lots of bells and whistles. We like bells and whistles.

Makes about 2 dozen

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup spelt flour
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 6 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar holiday sprinkles, silver dragees, crushed candy cane, mini chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325 F.

2. Whisk the flours, granulated sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Add the melted butter and eggs and stir until combined. The dough will appear very dry just keep working it until you've incorporated all the ingredients. Cover and refrigerate the dough until firm, about 20 to 30 minutes.

3. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Place the confectioners' sugar in a bowl. Place the other toppings out in small bowls.

4. Remove dough from refrigerator. Scoop a tablespoon size amount of dough and roll it into a ball. Drop the ball in the confectioners' sugar and coat the outside.

Place it on prepared cookie sheet. Slightly flatten it with the palm of your hand and then press your thumbprint into the centre. Fill the centre with your choice of decoration. Repeat until dough is finished. Be sure to space the cookies two inches apart.

5. Bake the cookies until puffed and slightly cracked, about 10 minutes. Let cool three minutes on the baking sheets, then transfer to rack to cool completely.

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GREAT GIFT

Coconut Snowballs

These little gems — with a hint of lemon — scream wintry treat.

Makes 2 dozen

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 3/4 cups sugar
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 Tbsp cream cheese, softened
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 4 or 5 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
- 1 1/2 cup sweetened shredded coconut

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F.

2. Mix together flour, sugar, salt together in a bowl. With an electric mixer add softened butter about 1/4 cup at a time until it combines with the dry ingredients. You'll have a pebbly mixture.

Add 2 Tbsp of softened cream cheese and vanilla. You'll need to use your hands to bring the mixture together into a dough. Knead for a minute or two.

3. Line two cookie sheets with parchment.

4. Use a tablespoon to scoop the dough, roll it in your hands to make balls. Place on the lined sheets at least an inch apart. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until lightly browned. Take them out and allow them to cool completely on a rack.

5. While they cool, mix 3 Tbsp of lemon juice with 1 Tbsp of cream cheese. Slowly add 1 1/2 cups of confectioner's sugar until you have a thick icing. Now add as much lemon juice as you need to thin it out to a glaze.

6. On a plate, spread your coconut in a layer. Swirl each cookie in the glaze (let excess drip off) then press it in coconut to cover. Allow to set.

CERI MARSH AND LAURA KEOGH

CLASSIC CHOICE

Heavenly Chocolate Peanut Butter Balls

A sprinkle of sea salt makes the classic flavours of chocolate and peanut butter feel all grown up.

Makes 25 to 30 balls

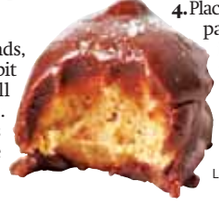
INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup creamy natural peanut butter
- 3 Tbsp butter, softened
- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
- 8 oz chocolate, chopped (or chocolate chips)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, mix peanut butter, sugar and butter together until they form a dough. Scoop it and form a ball, cover in plastic wrap and place in the fridge for at least 15 minutes.

2. Using your hands, pinch off a small bit of dough and roll into 1-inch balls. If the dough gets too sticky as you're working just pop it back in the fridge for a few minutes. Place the balls on a parchment lined baking sheet. Place the baking sheet in the freezer for at least half an hour to chill. You want them cold and firm.



3. Place a small sauce pan with a couple of inches of water over medium heat until it simmers. Place the chocolate in a bowl and then set the bowl over the pan (don't allow the bottom to touch the water).

Once chocolate is melted remove from heat. Using a toothpick, pick up each ball, swirl it around in the chocolate; let excess drip off.

4. Place the dipped ball onto parchment lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with a pinch of sea salt before chocolate hardens. Refrigerate until you serve.

CERI MARSH AND LAURA KEOGH

EASY TO BAKE

Spiced Christmas Trees with Lemon Icing

Like your nostalgic favourite the gingerbread man, these spiced cookies look and taste every bit as festive.

Makes about 12

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 cups spelt flour, plus more for rolling
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp cloves
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup unsulfured molasses

For Icing:
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/3 cups confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves and salt. In a separate bowl, cream together the butter and sugar with a hand mixer until creamy.

3. Beat the egg and then add. Mix until combined. Add molasses until combined.

4. With the mixer on low, gradually add your flour, blend until combined. Remove the dough from the bowl and then wrap it in plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator to firm, at least an hour and up to three days.

5. On a lightly-floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4 inch thick. With a sharp knife, cut dough into 2-inch wide triangles.

6. Place the triangles on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper 1-inch apart from each other.

Bake until cookies are firm and lightly browned on edges, 10 to 12 minutes.

CERI MARSH AND LAURA KEOGH

STORAGE TIP

The best part about these recipes is they freeze well. Store them in an airtight container for up to four weeks.

WRAP IT UP

Gift wrapping ideas

Creative packaging tips that make you look like you know your way around a craft store.

There lots of fun, inexpensive ways to package your homemade cookies for gift. Depending on the kind of cookies and the amount you're gifting, try some of our pretty and creative ideas.

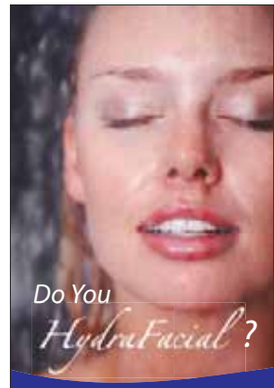
• Plain brown paper bags can be filled with any shape cookies and folded at the top and then secured closed with decorative homemade labels.

• A large Mason jar can be stacked with regular cookies or filled with balls. Adorn the lids with decorative homemade stick-on labels and tie the necks with jute twine, red and white baker's twine or yarn.

• Fill wine bags with a stack of cookies and then tie at the neck with a ribbon with a decorative hanging tag attached. Add a holiday ornament to make it more festive.

• Arrange balls or silver dollar size cookies in a decorative cardboard loaf pan with tissue and then cover with see-through wrapping and ribbon.

CERI MARSH & LAURA KEOGH



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Mull these light options

THE HOLIDAYS

Tips to cut the calories in these festive drinks

Theresa Albert
For Metro Canada

All year long you know to avoid drinking your calories. Then December hits and you are tempted. But you don't have to blow the month by the mouthful, save your calories for the food with these holiday beverage hacks.

Egg Nog

Averages about 225 calories per cup (without the rum!). Don't be tempted by the "low fat" versions, what they lack in fat, they make up in sugar. Instead, mix 50/50 with skim milk and add extra nutmeg.

Mulled wine

What could possibly be wrong with wine and spices? Most recipes also add in sugar by the gravy boat load, that's what. At about 250 calories per glass, some versions literally double the load of a harmless glass of wine. Make your own version with orange peels, star anise and cinnamon sticks. There is no sugar needed to make this cozy beverage in a slow cooker that will simmer all day and make your home smell like holiday without the scented candles. Or stick with your usual glass or two of plain red wine.

Pumpkin Latte

Tim Hortons pumpkin latte serves up a delicious 260 calories for a medium cup. For that, you can enjoy a straight up latte made with frothy skim milk and no sugar and an entire caramel dip yeast donut. That's right, the donut itself is 190 calories that you can actually eat.

Theresa is an on-camera food and health expert, nutritionist and writer who loves to spread the word on food

Cut the sugar out of mulled wine and opt for a version with just orange peels, star anise and cinnamon sticks. ISTOCK

LIQUID ASSETS

Cold nights call for warm drinks

Peter Rockwell
For Metro Canada

While you can release your inner mixologist by Googling mulled wine for the instructions on how to make your vino glow, there are plenty of pre-mixed versions of winter-oriented drinks available that only require you to know how to press the start button on your microwave.

Jack Daniel's Winter Jack ($19.39–$23.98) takes its inspiration from an original family recipe of JD, apples, cloves and cinnamon poured during the holidays by the famous Tennessee whiskey makers.

With a 15 per cent alcohol level, its whiskey flavour is subtle to say the least, allowing the spices to shine after being very lightly heated. Red hot in a completely different sense is Crown Royal's Northern Harvest Rye ($30.60-$34.99). Recently awarded World Whisky of the Year by Whisky Bible author Jim Murray, the super smooth Manitoba-made spirit, produced using an unheard of 90 per cent rye, is a must try for anyone who appreciates a good dram.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

POP-UP SHOP HEIST

Gwyneth Paltrow's GOOP shop robbed

Authorities are searching for three men who robbed Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop pop-up shop in New York City of more than $173,000 worth of jewelry and watches. It happened Saturday afternoon. Police say one of the suspects used some kind of object to open a cabinet containing the merchandise while the employees were distracted.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CONTROVERSY

Adele accused of copying 1985 tune

A song off Adele's new album 25 is causing a stir in Turkey, where fans have accused the British songstress of copying a song by a popular Kurdish artist.

People have taken to social media to debate whether Adele's Million Years Ago closely resembles Ahmet Kaya's 1985 song, Acilara Tutunmak.

Adele's song, one Twitter user wrote, "is identical" to Kaya's well-known ballad. "Please credit him!" Some even went as far as calling Adele a thief. A prominent Kurdish artist from Malatya, Turkey, Kaya died in exile in Paris in 2000 at age 43.

Kaya's wife, Gülten Kaya, told Turkish daily Posta that she did not believe Adele deliberately stole the song. "However, if she consciously did it, then it would be theft," she said, according to Hurriyet Daily News.

Naim Dilmener, a Turkish musicologist, said he thinks the songs only resemble each other "a little bit." He said he didn't believe Adele copied Kaya's version.

The feelings behind both songs "maybe are the same," Dilmener said, but "that's all."

Adele's publicist did not immediately return request for comment. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Fans of Kurdish artist Ahmet Kaya say Adele's Million Years Ago sounds a lot like his song Acilara Tutunmak. GETTY IMAGES

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Girlfriends' Guide is feminist stealth genius

GIRLFRIENDS' GUIDE TO DIVORCE, S1, E3 (SLICE SHOMI)

Lyla (Janeane Garofalo), one of three attractive, acerbic friends who are navigating life in their 40s in Los Angeles after divorce, has been called into her son's teacher's office because she sent her nanny to cover Story Time.

"It sends a message to children that they're not your priority," the teacher guilt-mongers. Lyla, a high-powered attorney, lets her have it.

"By all means, I apologize. I apologize for having a job. But here's the thing: I don't work, my kids don't go to school. So if you want to tell me tuition is free, I'll be here for Story Time, and Arbor Day, and every other bullshit holiday that costs me a fortune. But if you're not going to tell me it's free, I gotta work. Because I'm a working mother. Don't call me in here again."

She stalks out. Once she's through the door, though, her face crumbles, just for a second. She's right, but she feels like dirt anyway.

Girlfriends' Guide to Divorce tackles motherhood, marriage, loneliness and inequity. HANDOUT

This show is stealth genius. It lures you in with furiously-paced patter about ex-husbands and breast implants, and then socks it to you with home truths about motherhood, marriage, loneliness, inequity. At its best, Sex and the City pointed out what single women in their 30s had to deal with in the world's most success-oriented town.

Girlfriends' Guide takes that one decade further — it zooms in on the ironies and indignities inflicted on bright, vital 40-somethings in the capital of youth obsession. It's the most feminist show on TV.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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A.J. CASSON DESIGN FOR CHRISTMAS CARD, 1927

A.Y. JACKSON CHRISTMAS CARD PHOTOMECHANICAL PRINT WITH HAND-COLOURING ON COLOURED PAPER

THOREAU MACDONALD CHRISTMAS EVE. MACDONALD WAS COLOUR BLIND, SO HE WORKED MOSTLY IN BLACK AND WHITE

JACK BUSH FAMILY CHRISTMAS CARD, 1934. THE ABSTRACT PAINTER PRODUCED A NEW CHRISTMAS CARD EVERY YEAR

LAWREN HARRIS THIS UNDATED CARD EVOKES THE GROUP OF SEVEN PAINTER'S HIGH-MODERN LANDSCAPES OF THE 1930S

FRANZ JOHNSTON 1930 CHRISTMAS CARD, DONE IN AN ART DECO STYLE

A.J. CASSON DESIGN FOR CHRISTMAS CARD, 1927. THIS CARD WAS MADE THE YEAR AFTER CASSON JOINED THE GROUP OF SEVEN

FRANKLIN CARMICHAEL MOUNTAIN ASH (ROWANBERRY) STATE II

Seasonal greetings down to a fine art

MCMICHAEL COLLECTION

Christmas cards from the Group of Seven and their peers

"This house was made for Christmas," Signe McMichael once famously declared about the modern pastoral estate she and her husband Robert built near Kleinburg, Ont. in the 1950s, and with its multiple open hearths and forests of towering pines all around — not to mention its owners' staunchly traditionalist world view — she was absolutely right.

Even with a mild fall not giving much away to the winter wonderland just around the corner, the old house had a throwback sense of festivity to come.

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection's careful handling of its founders' fraught legacy is never too far from mind, as Robert fought to the last to keep the museum's vaults locked tight from modern and contemporary work that he believed would damage the legacy of his beloved Group of Seven and their peers. But if there's one time of year to not let such auld acquaintance be forgot, as they say, and embrace the simple sentimentality of the season, well, this is it.

This year, Signe's words about the festive season become the title of a show of Christmas cards, which isn't as cutesy as it seems. Make no mistake: it's certainly that, but the show is also a showcase of talents from the canon of Canadian artists, many of whom — like a good chunk of the Group of Seven — got their start as graphic or commercial artists.

Blossoming into professional painters, many of them kept up the practice of card-making for their friends and family, lending their holiday greetings the powerfully personal touch of their talents.

And about that traditionalist legacy: While you'll find the familiars here in great number — Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, A.J. Casson and friends — a few abstractionists, like Kazuo Nakamura and Harold Towne, sneak into the mix, but none more welcome than Jack Bush.

ON DISPLAY This House Was Made For Christmas continues at the McMichael Collection of Canadian Art to Jan. 31.

Bush, who also began as a commercial illustrator, blossomed in his later years into one of the world's great abstract painters, as a major retrospective at National Gallery of Canada made clear.

Far from the robust abstraction of his legacy, Bush's cards are warming tributes to his personal life as a family man and man of faith, for whom the holidays brought special meaning he seemed bursting to share. Here, he ties it up with a bright red bow. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Transit-accessible hikes in Vancouver

SHUTTERSTOCK

Vancouver is known for its mountains and forests. It's about time you explored them.

Hiking brings a host of health benefits, including increased bone density and lowered risk of heart disease.

Walking those trails and hiking those inclines builds your muscles, especially in your hips and lower legs, including your glutes, quadriceps and hamstrings. Not to mention all those mood-boosting endorphins that will be flooding your body from all that exercise, smelling the fragrant forest air, and taking in the spectacular views.

No car? No excuse. Here are four hikes in the Lower Mainland that are accessible via public transit.

The Lynn loops
Walk along rushing Lynn Creek in spectacular Cedar and Hemlock forest of Lynn Headwaters Regional Park in North Vancouver. Get there via the 228 Lynn Valley bus departing from Lonsdale Quay bus loop.

Quarry Rock hike, Deep Cove
This 1.5-hour hike takes you to a spectacular lookout point in one of the prettiest areas of the city, Deep Cove. Get there by taking the 239 Capilano University bus from Lonsdale Quay bus loop. Transfer to the 212 Deep Cove bus at Phibbs Exchange bus loop.

Pacific Spirit Regional Park
Located in the University Endowment Lands at UBC, this gorgeous park is flat and accessible in the city.

For a beautiful and easy three-hour walk through the park on its various trails, guided by the frequent signage, enter at the park gate on 16th Avenue adjacent to Camosun Park. Get there from downtown Vancouver via the 22 Macdonald bus, getting off at Macdonald and 16th, then transfer to the 33 UBC bus heading westbound.

The Grouse Grind
Vancouver's favourite bragging right, the Grouse Grind is a wall of stairs through the woods that you climb for about 2.9 kilometres.

Have lunch at the top, and if you have some energy left, try hiking the Goat and Little Goat hikes at the top, then take a spectacular gondola ride down the mountain. Get there on the 236 Grouse Mountain bus from Lonsdale Quay bus loop.

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metro DRIVE

Your essential daily news

Triple-threat Ioniq: Hyundai's first all-electric model also available as hybrid and plug-in hybrid

Forester stands out in a crowd

REVIEW

No need to go all the way with power with this compact SUV

Jil McIntosh
For Metro Canada

Extra power is good for bragging rights, but it isn't always necessary to opt for it just because it's there. That was evident when I drove the two engine choices in Subaru's Forester. While the base engine doesn't sound as impressive on paper as its stronger sibling, it should be enough for many drivers and for a lot less cash.

The entry-level powerplant is a 2.5-litre four-cylinder that makes 170 horsepower. Moving up to the turbocharged 2.0-litre gives you 250 horses, but it's an extra $2,200 to do so. Test-drive them both before you make up your mind solely on the power numbers.

My 2.5i, as it's called, was equipped with a six-speed manual transmission. It keeps the price down, but that's about all; the shifter feels mushy and there's no driving excitement in it. You're best to go for the automatic continuously-variable transmission (CVT). All-wheel drive is standard on all models.

The shifter aside, the Forester has always been one of my favourite vehicles. It's nicely sized and well-balanced, and the steering is light but responsive. It's roomy and comfortable, and the back seats fold flat for extra storage space. The cabin design is handsome and the controls are large and easy to use, save for a few touchscreen icons that can be tough to accurately tap when you're moving.

My 2.5i was in Touring trim, which gave me a 6.2-inch touchscreen stereo, while my turbocharged tester in top-line Limited trim included a 7-inch infotainment system with navigation that, new for 2016, includes map updating. Higher trim lines can also be optioned with EyeSight, which uses a windshield-mounted camera for such features as lane departure warning and collision mitigation.

> **While the base engine doesn't sound as impressive on paper as its stronger sibling, it should be enough for many drivers.**

This smaller SUV/crossover segment is a crowded one, but the Forester holds its own. It's priced about the middle of the pack, and since all-wheel drive is an option on some of its competitors, be sure you're comparing prices accordingly. I think its nimble feel and good road manners set it apart from many of the rest, even if you don't feel a need to go all the way with the power.

THE CHECKLIST | 2016 SUBARU FORESTER

THE BASICS

Type. Four-door, five-passenger compact SUV
Engine (hp/torque). 2.5-litre horizontal four-cylinder (170/174); 2.0-litre turbocharged horizontal four-cylinder (250/258)
Transmissions. Six-speed manual or continuously variable (CVT)
Price. $25,995 (base), $29,995 (as tested), plus destination

COOL FEATURES

- EyeSight camera-based safety technologies
- Steering-responsive fog lights
- Hill descent control
- Panoramic sunroof
- Power-operated liftgate
- Windshield wiper de-icer
- Auto-dimming mirrors

JIL MCINTOSH/FOR METRO

POINTS

- Subaru's "symmetrical" all-wheel drive doesn't refer to the power split, but to the position of its engine, transmission, and driveline components.
- The Forester can be ordered as PZEV, for Partial Zero Emissions Vehicle, which uses a specific catalytic converter, air intake and fuel injectors; it was designed to meet California's air standards.
- Turbo models add unique front-end styling but are optioned the same as comparable non-turbo trim lines.

MARKET POSITION

Subaru made its mark by offering all-wheel drive in all of its vehicles (except for the recently-added BRZ sports car), which made it popular for drivers facing Canadian winters, along with using only horizontally-opposed engines.

THE COMPETITION

Ford Escape AWD
Base price: $27,199

Toyota RAV4 AWD
Base price: $27,255

Honda CR-V AWD
Base price: $28,550

TECHNOLOGY

Ford testing semi-autonomous systems to help drivers in a jam

Ford wants to take the stress out of every element of the daily commute, from coping with stop-start rush-hour traffic to quickly and safely manoeuvring into a parking space at journey's end.

"For many drivers, experiencing heavy traffic on the way to work can leave them stressed and angry, even before the work day begins," said Reid Steiger, technical expert for automated driving at Ford of Europe.

Ford's potential solution, Traffic Jam Assist, is currently in the testing stage and works by combining a number of already developed individual active driver aids — adaptive cruise control and lane keeping

"Traffic Jam Assist helps the driver maintain the distance to the vehicle ahead and helps to keep the vehicle centred in the lane. The system aims to reduce driver stress in dense traffic," explains Steiger.

When activated via the push of a button, in a traffic jam situation, the car's radar and cameras monitor lane markings and how far away the car is from the vehicle in front. It can then take over, moving forward when space opens and slowing to a halt again in time with the traffic. The driver can take over at any time and the system monitors steering wheel interaction to make sure the driver is still alert and ready to step in if needed.

The second system being put through its paces is called Remote Park Assist, which enables the driver to park the car, via a key fob command, remotely. Standing outside the vehicle in a parking lot or underground garage, the car will be able to manoeuvre itself into a perpendicular space without any assistance. AFP

ELSEWHERE

Ford is by no means the only carmaker working on these types of systems. The latest **BMW 7 Series** will park itself remotely with the push of a keyfob button. Likewise, **the Volvo XC90** semi-autonomously drove the mayor of L.A. through rush-hour traffic on his way to the Connected Car Expo just four weeks ago.

Ford's Remote Park Assist lets you park your car by remote control. FORD MOTOR COMPANY

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Today's coffee, tomorrow's bus fuel

TEXT AND IMAGES BY WHEELBASE MEDIA

BIODIESEL

London to be bean-powered?

British coffee purveyor Bio-bean wants to do more than provide customers with their morning jolt. It wants to use leftover coffee beans to heat homes and power buses in London. Bio-bean wants the city's caffeine dispensaries to contribute used coffee grinds to process them into pellets that can be used to heat buildings, reports Gizmag. Because coffee waste is about 20 per cent oil, it can also be processed into ethanol or biodiesel for use in cars and buses equipped to burn such fuels. The goal is to make enough pellets to heat upward of 15,000 homes, and eventually be used to help power the city transport system, which uses buses that run on biodiesel.

RIGHT FIT

Large vehicles that stop and go are excellent candidates for electrification. They're large enough to carry the batteries and they don't add pollution to already-congested urban areas.

SINGLE CHARGE

Electric transit bus cracks 400-km range

An electric transit bus that can serve any typical transit route in the United States has been developed by Proterra of Greenville, S.C. The company says its Catalyst XR model achieved 410 kilometres on a single charge circulating a test track at 50 km/h, giving it the best efficiency rating ever for a 12-metre bus, almost 160 kilometres more than China's BYD electric bus. The bus tested was fitted with a new generation of storage technology developed by Proterra and comprised eight battery packs. The body is aerodynamically designed and made from lightweight carbon fibre and other advanced composite materials. Proterra says its 10-pack XR configuration could exceed 500 kilometres on a single charge.

THE GREEN ANGLE

Metro's weekly picks for the latest in environmental news

IMPROVED

Go further with Zero's electric motorcycles

Electric motorcycles have made large advances in a short time, and they continue to get ever better. California-based Zero Motorcycles' 2016 range of virtually silent two-wheelers grows to five distinct rides from three, ranging from street and dual-sport models to an off-road dirt bike. Zero is offering up an all-new motor and increased battery efficiency for longer range and higher capacities across the board, reports Gizmag. Riding the outgoing models hard for a day could cause them to overheat, tripping a thermal management mode that cuts power back to save the engine and battery from thermal damage. The new motor promises to provide full performance for longer, without overheating.

CALIFORNIA

Hydrogen stations making inroads, slowly

Having been chosen by Honda, Hyundai and Toyota as their launching pad for hydrogen fuel-cell cars in North America, California is responding with a growing number of hydrogen filling stations either already built, under construction or going through the permitting or regulatory approval process. But to date, notes Green Car Reports, only two of the about 50 stations underway meet the California Fuel Cell Partnership's definition of "full retail," being equipped to dispense hydrogen, accept all forms of payment as used at a typical gas station, and have no access restrictions. A further handful of stations previously built for demonstration purposes, research and pilot programs are operating but not selling to the general public.

+ FUEL-CELL SEDAN

Mirai demand vastly exceeds supply in U.S.

Early demand for the Toyota Mirai hydrogen fuel-cell sedan outstripped the car's first-year United States allotment by nearly two to one.

Toyota plans to sell 1,000 hand-built Mirais in the United States per year to the end of 2017; but by early October, 1,900 California customers had applied for the 2016-model-year cars.

Available only in California initially, the virtually hand-built car sells for $57,500 US. Toyota expects nine out of 10 customers to lease their Mirai for $499 per month with $3,469 down.

Applicants must submit their requests to a dedicated Mirai order website and be interviewed for suitability, based largely on proximity to the limited number of hydrogen fuelling stations that currently exist in California.

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Model shown: Pilot Touring YF6H9GKN starting from $52,185**

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SALE PRICE: $27,995

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SALE PRICE: $20,595

2011 CHEVY EQUINOX

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SALE PRICE: $19,875

2015 CHRYSLER 200 S

Leather, navigation, panoramic sunroof, remote start, only 6,441 kms! heated steering wheel, heated seats, sport mode, backup camera, fully loaded.

SALE PRICE: $27,510

2014 SUBARU LEGACY LTD

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SALE PRICE: $32,510

2014 KIA RIO 5 EX AT

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2014 KIA FORTE 5 EX AT

2.0L, heated seats, Bluetooth, backup camera, only 18,430 kms, AUX/USB input ports, Active ECO, 60/40 split rear seats.

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2014 DODGE JOURNEY SXT

Great pick for families on a budget. Useful interior storage solutions and a smart touchscreen interface. A/C. Power and heated mirrors. CD/AM/FM, AUX input and USB with external media control.

SALE PRICE: $19,899

2013 KIA RIO EX+

Only 25,958 kms! Stylish inside and out, ample standard and optional features, high-quality interior materials, strong acceleration, feels bigger than it is.

SALE PRICE: $11,525

2014 KIA SPORTAGE EX

Only 15,643 kms, AWD, navigation, panoramic sunroof, leather, fully loaded, split folding rear seats, Bluetooth, push button

SALE PRICE: $29,880

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My floor mats: A love story

AUTOPILOT

It's a dirty job but they do it (though maybe avoid beige)

Mike Goetz
For Metro Canada

Mike's floor mat team — summer and winter — is always there for him. MIKE GOETZ/FOR METRO

One of the most unheralded components of our vehicles is the floor mat. It's time to give it some love.

Not a huge amount. That would be crazy and weird.

But enough to acknowledge the tough work they do down there, by our feet. They literally get stepped on, multiple times every day. And sometimes we grind dirt deep into their fibres.

They are in the first line of fire in the war against interior dirt, and their lifespan can be short, certainly never as long as the vehicle itself. They are designed to take a hit, and when they have taken too many, they get replaced.

But during their short life span they give it their all. My summer mats are made of carpet and rubber, and when I use the high-pressure wash wand at my local do-it-yourself car wash emporium, to blast the dirt out of them at season's end, I always marvel at how much dirt they are able to suspend for their meagre size.

These carpet mats, which typically come standard on new vehicles, are there not only to keep things clean, but also to look inviting, and make the interior feel like your living room. If these floor mats are in a light shade, like beige or pale blue, to match the interior … well, there's no hope for them in the long run. They have an impossible job.

I once had a Porsche test vehicle with light beige cashmere floor mats. I turned them upside down for the whole week I had the car, lest I get a mark on them, and was never able to enjoy the esthetic beauty they were designed to deliver. I looked at their rubber backing all week and thought what an irresponsible and lavish way to design a floor mat.

When you come to think of it, floor mat design has not progressed much over the years, especially when you consider all the rampant technology that has reached other parts of the vehicle. By this time shouldn't we have some sort of automatic floor mat roll, which could roll a new section of floor mat into place as soon as one section got dirty? Or some kind of built-in wet-vac system that could automatically and quickly suck up snow, water, or spilled mocha latte?

I guess the latest advance would be the moulded hard plastic "trays" that are specially made for every individual model. Weathertech is the leading proponent of these products, and I recently got a set, which look very well engineered, and fit great. But they do make me feel like I need special help — like during a fancy restaurant dinner, I'm the one with a plastic tray on my lap, instead of the nice, linen napkin everybody else uses.

But that's a small price to pay for the great winter floor protection I'm looking forward to, from my hardworking, underappreciated floor mats.

ELECTRIC RACING SERIES

Formula E to go the AI route

Real-time computing algorithms will replace humans in an innovative series of driverless races to be staged alongside the regular Formula E season, promoters said last week.

The Formula E championship features 10 teams of two drivers on city-centre circuits. Brazilian Nelson Piquet Jr. won the inaugural 2014-15 world championship.

The fully electric racing series is seen as a cleaner and greener alternative to Formula One and the news of the Formula E initiative coincides with the Paris-hosted COP21 global climate talks.

Now Formula E and Kinetik, a technology company specializing in electric vehicles and trains, will also stage races between 10 teams of two driverless cars on the same circuits as a warm-up show to the main event.

Driver Lucas di Grassi demonstrates a Formula E race car in 2014. JOE KLAMAR/AFP

This new championship called "Roborace" will start for the 2016-17 season. The artificial-intelligence-guided one-hour races will run over the full championship.

Kinetik founder Denis Sverdlov said he believed it represented the future of motor racing and the motor industry.

"In the future, all of the world's vehicles will be assisted by AI and powered by electricity, thus improving the environment and road safety," he said.

Cities on the 2015-16 circuit include Beijing, Paris, Berlin, London and Buenos Aires. AFP

metro SPORTS

The Pittsburgh Penguins announced winger Pascal Dupuis has been forced to retire due to a medical condition related to blood clots

Jake Virtanen is going to the AHL. CLAUS ANDERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

CANUCKS

Virtanen demoted for conditioning

Jake Virtanen is headed to the Utica Comets in the American Hockey League on a conditioning stint, the Vancouver Canucks announced Tuesday.

The 19-year-old forward from nearby Abbotsford has missed the last four games due to a hip pointer injury suffered in a loss to Anaheim at the end of last month. In 19 games with Vancouver, Virtanen has one goal and four points.

The Canucks are also closing in on decision time for Virtanen and, to some extent, fellow 19-year-old centre Jared McCann.

Both Virtanen and McCann are eligible to play for Team Canada at the upcoming World Junior Championships, however the Canucks must decide before Dec. 19 to either release them to the Canadian team or keep them in Vancouver.

It's difficult to see McCann joining Team Canada, especially in the wake of Brandon Sutter's sports hernia surgery, which came with an expected recovery time of four to six weeks.

Virtanen, on the other hand, seems the likelier of Vancouver's two rookie forwards to join Team Canada, especially if the Canucks feel a tournament against players in his age group could give the developing power forward a boost of confidence.

19

Number of games Virtanen has played for the Canucks this season.

The Canucks host the New York Rangers on Wednesday at Rogers Arena. On Monday, they snapped a five-game losing streak with a 5-2 victory over the Buffalo Sabres. Vancouver has not won two consecutive games since the start of November. CAM TUCKER/METRO

Giants losing GM as Bonner steps down

WHL

Only general manager team has ever had

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

Known as the only general manager the Vancouver Giants have ever had, Scott Bonner is stepping aside to take a senior management position at The Sports Corporation, a renowned hockey agency firm.

The news, made official Tuesday, marks a fresh start for Bonner, who will stay on with the Giants for now as the Western Hockey League team transitions to a new GM.

While under his management, the Giants made it to the Memorial Cup tournament in 2006 and 2007, winning the championship in 2007. From 2005-06 to 2009-10, they were a dominant force in the B.C. Division, with the top record in five straight seasons, including a 57-win, 119-point campaign in 2008-09.

However, Bonner admits the losing throughout these last few years has taken its toll.

Since the start of the 2013-14 season, the Giants have gone through four different head coaches — Don Hay, Troy Ward, Claude Noel and the current bench boss Lorne Molleken — and missed the playoffs in two of the last three seasons.

Scott Bonner admits the recent losing has taken its toll. CAM TUCKER/METRO

This year, the Giants sit last in the Western Conference with an 8-18-2-2 record.

"For me, it's the last two (seasons) that are most concerning," said Bonner.

Change throughout the organization over the years but particularly at the coaching position, with the departure of Hay, adversely affected the routine for Bonner.

"Since the turnover, it's never quite been the same," said Bonner. "And for me, that's when I knew that maybe I'm a clog in the wheel.

"We've had some bad luck. Bad results. Bad trades. Bad picks. It's been a culmination of errors.

"Some are mine. Some are scouts and the coaches. But it doesn't matter. At the end of the day, it's all about results and I thought the last two years, the wins and losses were weighing heavily on myself and my family."

Bonner will continue with his numerous administrative tasks and will be a part of management for the WHL trade deadline. He maintained that he will not be involved in the hiring process for a new GM.

"It's not something we're just going to do overnight. This is a huge, huge decision that we need to be sure of what we're doing," said owner Ron Toigo.

IN BRIEF

Family of late player Montador suing NHL

The family of the late Steve Montador is suing the NHL over concussions and other brain injuries the defenceman suffered during his playing career.

The lawsuit alleges that the league collected data on concussions as far back as 1997 but failed to warn Montador about the dangers.

Montador died in February, and an autopsy showed the 35-year-old suffered from Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, a progressive degenerative disease that can be caused by repetitive brain trauma. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Warriors beat Pacers to improve to 23-0

The Golden State Warriors improved to 23-0 this season, with Klay Thompson scoring a season-high 39 points and Stephen Curry adding 29 points, seven rebounds and 10 assists Tuesday night in a 131-123 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

The defending NBA champs have won 27 straight dating to last season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manziel placed back under centre by Browns

Browns quarterback Johnny Manziel is starting again after being benched for two games. Manziel will make his fourth start this season on Sunday against the San Francisco 49ers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fast start distant memory

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Ronnie Shuker

So after five straight losses, the Vancouver Canucks managed to win a game by beating the lowly Buffalo Sabres. Yawn. Even with that win, Vancouver has been one of the worst teams in the NHL for all but one week of the season. How large does the sample size have to grow before major changes are finally made?

The Canucks haven't just been bad, they've been brutal. Since Oct. 14, just one week into the season when the Canucks sat second overall in the NHL after a surprising 3-0-1 start, they have the fewest wins (seven) and second-fewest points (21) of all 30 teams. Only the Calgary Flames have fewer points in that span, and only the Toronto Maple Leafs have fewer regulation/overtime wins overall (seven) this season.

Which is more likely, then: that the Canucks are the team of their first four games or the one from their past 25? Given a choice between two sample sizes, the smart money is almost always on the larger one.

There are two things GM Jim Benning is likely holding onto in hopes of a potential turnaround: the Canucks have a league-leading eight overtime/shootout losses, and they've played the third-most road games so far in the NHL. Of course, that would be selective thinking. Benning didn't caution against an inflated record last season when the Canucks rode a lucky 22-4-5 mark in one-goal games all the way to the playoffs. And even with Tuesday's win over Buffalo, Vancouver still has the league's third-worst home record at just 4-6-3 so far this season.

A turnaround in Vancouver is as unlikely as a Ryan Miller resurgence. As much as management is hoping for it to happen, it's just not coming. It doesn't take an analytics nerd to figure out that this is a middling team, at absolute best.

The worst thing an organization can do is give fans unfounded hope. And that's exactly what the Canucks have been doing for the past two-plus seasons.

One has to wonder what it'll take for management to wave the white flag and commit to a full-on rebuild. Fans can take it. At this point, most would probably welcome it.

A Ryan Miller resurgence would help the Canucks, but it doesn't look likely. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

7

Number of wins by the Canucks since their 3-0-1 start to the season. No NHL team has fewer in that span. Only the Calgary Flames have fewer points in that span.

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RECIPE Turkey and Sweet Potato Skillet

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

The holidays are upon us but we can't survive on cookies alone. You're going to need the balance of some simple, healthy recipes. This one comes together in a snap.

Ready in
Prep time: 20 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 Tsps chili powder
- 1 1/2 cups yellow pepper, diced
- 1 1/2 cups sweet potato, peeled and diced
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup mozzarella, grated

Directions
1. In a large, oven-safe skillet, pour in oil, then brown your turkey over medium heat, breaking it up with the back of a spoon. Cook for about 5 minutes. Add the onions and garlic and cook for another 5 minutes until they are fragrant and begin to soften. Sprinkle the chili powder over top and stir.
2. Add the yellow pepper and allow it to soften for another 3 minutes or so. Stir in the sweet potatoes, cover and cook for about 10 minutes. Stir occasionally and add a bit of water if things dry out. Check to see that sweet potatoes are tender. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Sprinkle grated cheese.
4. Turn broiler on. Place the skillet under the heat for a minute or two until the cheese melts and just starts to brown. Remove carefully from the oven and serve.

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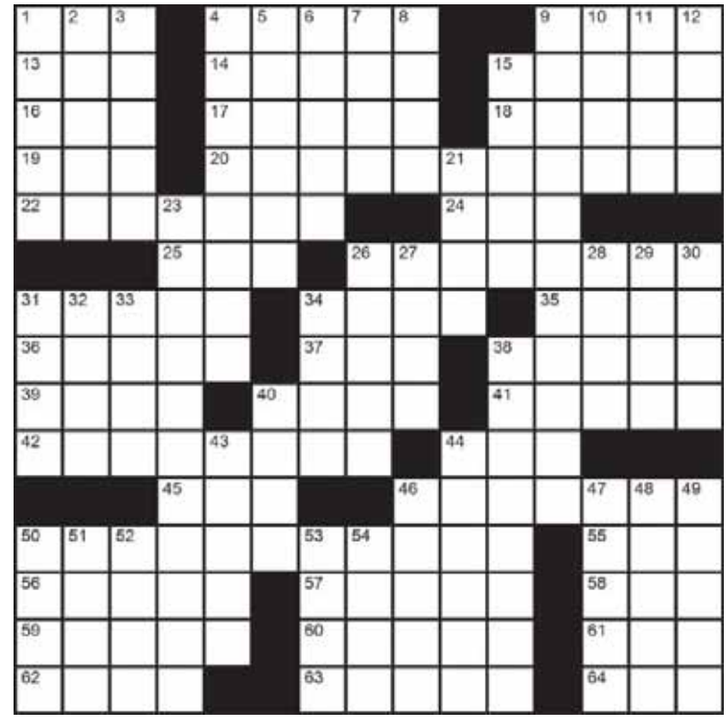
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Enjoyed the bench
4. Window material
9. Pear part
13. French vineyard
14. Montreal-based jazz vocalist Ms. Lee
15. Take care of, as arrangements: 2 wds.
16. Comedian Mr. James
17. Separated
18. "_ _ done now!" (Finished ...finally!)
19. Saguenay sidekick
20. Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, _-_ Mark A.G. Norman
22. Industrial Revolution creation
24. Standoff site in Quebec, 1990
25. "Growing Pains" Canadian star ...his initials-sharers
26. New Brunswick town on Chaleur Bay
31. UNESCO World Heritage Site in Jordan
34. Small horse
35. Sea lettuce
36. Winnebago owners, informally
37. Bonnet or derby
38. Stable tresses
39. Vintner's prefix
40. Salad or stirfry ingredient
41. Show anchored by Ben Mulroney
42. Internet Explorer, and others
44. Ms. MacGraw
45. "_-Devil" (1989)
46. Cloudiness
50. Late night host who does a Neil Young impression: 2 wds.
55. Me: French
56. Benefit
57. Prefix to 'graphy' (Fancy writing)
58. Men's deodorant brand
59. Immense-ish
60. Functional
61. Mr. Bellows
62. Looped cross
63. Mischa Barton series: wd. + letters
64. Conclusion

DOWN
1. "Beat it!"
2. Wonderful whiff
3. Gladiator's garment
4. Solemnity
5. Rabbits, in Rimouski
6. Has _ _ up one's sleeve
7. Desert-like
8. _ _ good example
9. Beaver = _ rodent
10. Rupture
11. French: Ici _ _ (Here and there)
12. _ Flanders (1722 Daniel Defoe book)
15. Latka's beloved on "Taxi"
21. "Finding Nemo" (2003) character
23. Big name in Canadian almanacs
26. Rake over the _
27. Poker stake
28. Arm bone
29. Mr. Knievel
30. Chore
31. "No _!" (Happy to oblige)
32. Best _ (Greatest)
33. _ _'clock (Coffee break time)
34. "_ Lap" (1983)
38. _ _ (Bryan Adams duettist on "When You're Gone")
40. Rolling Stones guitarist Mr. Richards, affectionately to fans
43. Demurely
44. Mr. Creed (Rocky's opponent in the fight of his career)
46. "Kukla, Fran and _"
47. Picture
48. Poison
49. Give way
50. Morning swig
51. Tennis great Mr. Lendl
52. Conceal
53. _ _ above the rest (Better than)
54. Wood strip

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Today the important things in life, such as love and family, will come into focus and the not-so-important things, such as money and ambition, will be seen for the illusions they are.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You will gain more in the long run if you help others as well as yourself. A good deed done now will pay off later, so act only in ways that bring smiles to other people's faces.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You could come into money this week, but you may sabotage the situation if you get suspicious and wonder what people's motives are. They are not trying to trick you, they are trying to help.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You will meet someone who attracts you today and while there may be nothing outwardly special about them on an inner level you just seem to fit together. Are you soul mates? Maybe, maybe not, but you are certainly on the same wavelength.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Try not to make promises that you may have to break. Make no promises at all. If you feel that you must at the very least add a get-out clause.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Get deeply involved in a cause that is close to your heart. It is not enough just to make a donation or cheer from afar, you have got to get personal. Roll up your sleeves.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Do more for yourself. Find ways to cut back on your commitments without making it seem as if you are abandoning friends and loved ones.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Relationships will go well today. There is something of the celebrity about you at the moment — heads turn in your direction wherever you go. Where did your star quality come from? Who knows, but don't waste it.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Try to avoid people who always seem to be talking you down. If you want to feel good about yourself spend time with those who like you for who you are, not some impossible ideal of who you should be.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Make it your business to make other people feel good. Not only will it cheer them up but it will cheer you up as well. The more you mix with strangers the more alive you will feel.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Today's Sun-Uranus link means you are at your best and almost anything you turn your hand to will work out well. Make sure people in positions of power know who you are and what you can do.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You may be eager to prove yourself but be selective. Don't spread yourself too thin. Focus on what means most to you and aim to be the best at it.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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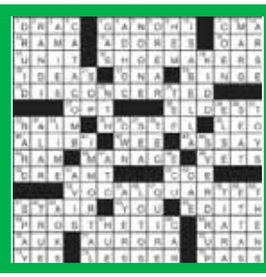

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4	8	9	1	5	2	3	6	7
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